

in tax reform is some level of certainty that this is going to last for a while. The only way to do that is to have bipartisanism at the table.

Go to the table. What will create growth? What will create good paying jobs? What will reduce the debt? This bill does exactly the worst.

Don't let them tell you that, even though they are adding trillions of dollars to the debt, that is going to be paid for by economic growth. It has never happened. Trickle-down economics, President Bush tried that. It was tried before. It has never done that. It has never paid for itself. In fact, it has only increased the national debt.

In that regard, Bruce Bartlett, who was an economist in the Reagan years as well as worked very closely with Jack Kemp in supply side economics as an advocate for supply side economics, said: We never said it would pay for itself. Anybody who tells you that these additions to the deficit will pay for themselves by growth, it is not true, it is nonsense, and, he said, BS.

Forgive me, Mr. Speaker. I am just quoting. I am just saying what he said.

So this is a moment of truth for our country. What are our values? How are they reflected in our budget? How do we grow the economy in a way that increases the paychecks of America's working families so that they have consumer confidence? they spend? they inject demand into the economy? they create jobs? they bring revenue to the Treasury?

How is it a good idea to cut education in order to give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in our country? Nothing brings more money to the Treasury than investments in education, early childhood, K-12, higher ed, postgrad, lifetime learning for our workers.

So, with stiff competition, mind you, having tax cuts which will steal from our budget investments in education is, with stiff competition, one of the worst ideas that the Republicans have to offer. But this is something that people should be alerted to, forgetting the policy and all the rest of it, what it means in your life.

Most likely, middle class family, you will pay more taxes. If you have a family member who is dependent on long-term healthcare, long-term care, whether in a nursing home or at home, most likely you will pay a price. If you have a family member who is on Medicare or if you are, Social Security disability, you will be affected by it.

The President said in his campaign the system is rigged. This is the rigging of the rig. This is taking the rig to a step that is almost impossible for us to return from. They take us down this road to ruin. They take us down this path to severe increase in the national debt to the tune of trillions of dollars, not even counting the debt service on it, at the cost of investments in our future, in our children, in our families, in fairness in our economy, in opportunity for America.

This is something that must be stopped, and we can start by stopping the assault on the State and local taxes deduction. Let's hold Members of Congress accountable for what they do that affects your pocketbook and your future.

We will be continuing this conversation for awhile, and we will have charts and the rest to visually demonstrate what this is.

Governance is about how you raise the money and how you invest it, and this is the dialogue that our country needs to hear very clearly for not only the policy aspects of it, but the personal consequences in their lives. This is a very bad deal for the American people, for middle class families.

Democrats want A Better Deal, better jobs, better pay, better future, and, by the way, to do this in a very bipartisan way.

#### REMEMBERING LUKE JOHNSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of 22-year-old Luke Johnson, a graduate of Pennsbury High School in my home of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Luke was known for his quirky sense of humor and his laid-back demeanor. He was a football standout at Pennsbury and was named best defensive player of the year his senior year. He also wrestled. He played soccer, baseball, and could throw a Frisbee a mile.

Above all, Luke loved to be with his family and with his friends, and it was his tight-knit group who supported Luke as he battled the increasingly common enemy of opioid addiction.

On May 17, 2017, Luke lost his battle with this disease after many difficult years of trying to return to normal.

Throughout his fight, like so many, he was haunted by shame, loss of self-worth, and the stigma of being addicted to opioids. This pain was shared by his friends and family, affecting the entire community, who just wanted to help, to see Luke be Luke.

As he tried to work his way towards recovery, Luke's parents, Maureen and John, discovered the genesis of his addiction: a prescription opioid pill given to him on his first day in high school. It progressed further when he was offered opioids after football game wins during his junior and senior year in high school. Ultimately, he was offered and accepted the invitation to try heroin.

Imagine the difficulty for this family and millions like them. At first, Luke's family was dumbfounded, angry, and hurt. They had no idea the difficulty he was facing.

They mobilized to support Luke by placing him into a local rehabilitation facility, but later found out that their insurance would not cover inpatient

treatment, so they sold their car for his initial recovery. However, when Luke came home, the people, places, and things from his old life triggered a relapse.

His parents hoped that a facility in Florida would remove these triggers from Luke's life and put him on the road to recovery. After several months of recovery in Florida, Luke was forced to find another place to live. This was the move, Mr. Speaker, that he was not ready to make. He died a few days later, before he had fully unpacked the few belongings that he had.

Following Luke's death, his parents established the Luke's HERO in ME Foundation in Yardley, Pennsylvania. Their goal is to help with the awareness, education, and to destigmatize opioid addiction. Ultimately, they want to ensure that other family, friends, and community networks can save their Luke.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a letter I received from Luke's parents.

OCTOBER 17, 2017.

CONGRESSMAN FITZPATRICK: Thank you for speaking with me at the David's New Day event last weekend. Your support for the opioid crisis has been more than welcome. The recent news, spurred by the 60 Minutes investigation, suggests that there are very deep rooted issues that need to be addressed to fully confront this issue. In short, you and your colleagues have much work to do. If there is anything we can do to help, please let me know.

I have included my son's story below to go along with the funeral card I gave you. I hope putting names, faces and stories to the cause will help drive the needed change.

John Luke Johnson, always known as Luke or Lukey or Duke, was a handsome athlete with piercing blue eyes. He was known for his quirky sense of humor and "chill" demeanor. He loved his dog Ethel (aka Ed Rendell)—she was just as quirky as Luke—and it never ceased to amaze me how gentle and kind Luke was to Ethel and all animals. He was a good athlete, playing football (named Pennsbury's best defensive player his senior year), wrestled, played soccer and baseball. He could throw a Frisbee a mile. He loved to be with his friends. He had more friends than I could count. But, his best friends—Tyler (an Army Ranger), Fardin (a college student) and Christian D (recent college grad), Christian H (a college student) he loved most. Like his family, these friends supported and loved Luke; despite the pain and battle that comes with addiction, they stuck around until the very end. In Luke, we lost that good guy next door—that guy that everyone loved and enjoyed being with.

One May 17th, 2017, our son Luke lost his battle with this terrible disease only after suffering for a few, very difficult years trying to return to "normal". Throughout his battle he was haunted by shame, a loss of self-worth and the stigma of being an addict. This pain was shared by his family and friends. Our aspirations for him and the aspirations he had for himself were replaced by the day to day struggle against the emotional and physiological damage caused by this disease.

During the process of recovery, we learned about Luke's path to becoming an addict. It started with a female friend giving him a pill (an opioid) to try his first day of high school. She passed away of an overdose last year. It

progressed further with a mom rewarding football players with opioids after game wins during his junior and senior year. Ultimately, he was offered and accepted the invitation to try heroin.

Until Luke found himself fully addicted and came to us for help, the indications were almost silent. He had the normal ups and downs of a teen and at times indulged in alcohol and smoked pot. While we had many discussions about making good choices and the implications of drug and alcohol abuse, we were not aware of the opioid use and the changes to his brain. We are confident Luke was not aware of the permanency of his actions and what he would ultimately have to battle.

Initially, we were dumbfounded, angry and hurt. Our understanding was limited to the stereo-type junkie from the 70's and the "just say no" Dare program information we received during the elementary school assemblies. We had no clue about how the drug had changed his brain and the very real difficulty he was in. We were quickly enlightened by our daughter Alex, who had recently studied this in college.

We mobilized to support Luke by placing him into a local facility. Our insurance would not cover inpatient treatment (we were told only after a relapse) and we sold our car and scraped up the 20k it cost for his initial recovery. After a 24 day stay, Luke came home but soon returned to using—despite meetings and drug tests the triggers "people places and things", we learned, were very real.

We found a place in Florida for Luke and assumed that being away from the triggers was best for Luke. He lasted 3 or 4 months and returned home only to use again. After several months, Luke found another place and was in recovery and clean for 9 months. After the facility in Florida changed ownership (and the new staff now cared more for insurance money than keeping their charges clean), Luke was forced to find another place to live. This was a move he was not ready to make. He died a few days later, before he had fully unpacked the few belongings he had.

After Luke's death, we established the Luke's HEROin ME foundation. The goal of the foundation is to help with the awareness, education and to destigmatize opioid addiction; ultimately, so others can save their Luke. While we have much more to do, we have made progress in our local high school, have shared Luke's story on radio, in the press and have begun to organize events to meet our goals. We will push to have a national standard that can be applied uniformly across the country. We need to have more standards for rehab facilities, many of which have become corrupt machines that fuel relapse and overdose deaths.

With opioid overdose (and the more recent introduction of fentanyl and carfentanil into commonly used drugs) as the leading cause of death among our young people, we have little choice.

We would love to support you in any way in your endeavor to end the opioid crisis. We are in this for the long haul, and want to help save as many lives as we can.

JOHN AND MAUREEN JOHNSON.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, with opioid overdose as the leading cause of death among our young people, we have little choice but to act.

When I met Luke's father, he gave me this picture of Luke, and he asked that we remember Luke as we work to end this epidemic.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this call to action.

□ 1045

#### IN DEFENSE OF AN HONORABLE WOMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to stand in the well of the House, and I am honored to do so today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to defend the Honorable FREDERICA WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to defend her not because of her color. She is a person of African ancestry, but, Mr. Speaker, I don't rise to defend her color. I believe that it is not the color of skin but rather the character within that determines the worth of men and women, so I rise to defend her worth. I rise to defend who she is. I rise to defend her integrity, her honor, and her dignity. I rise to defend an honorable woman.

Mr. Speaker, I do so because, in this country, we have allowed public discourse to be degraded to the extent that the President of the United States of America would call a Member of Congress, an honorable woman, wacky. Mr. Speaker, this is not a wacky person. This is a person of honor and integrity and of intellect.

Mr. Speaker, she is a former principal. She didn't just show up in the Congress one day. She was a State representative and a State senator before coming to Congress.

I rise to defend her. I rise to defend her because, Mr. Speaker, it has been said that she is an empty barrel. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that one who has served the country as well and as capable and as able that the maker of that statement would do so. But it says something about the influence that this President is having on people of honor and integrity. It says something about the influence that he is having on society. This is not an empty barrel. She is a person of intellect.

It has been said that she is all hat and no cattle. That is an insult. That is an insult because somehow someone is trying to send a signal that others will receive as a person who is an airhead. She is not an airhead. She is not a person who is all hat and no cattle. She has sponsored meaningful legislation. She has been in a fight to free many young women who have been taken captive. She is tenacious. She doesn't give out, she doesn't give up, she doesn't give in. She is a fighter, and I stand and I rise to defend her.

I do this, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that Carlyle is right: "No lie can live forever." She has been lied on, Mr. Speaker.

I do so because I believe that William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth, crushed to Earth, shall rise again." There are people who have tried to bury the truth about this good woman in an earthly grave of lies.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to defend her because I believe that if we allow one person to go undefended in a circumstance

like this, every person is at risk of being treated in a similar fashion. We are in some very difficult times, and many of us don't realize it. We have a person who is at the top who is setting a tone and tenor for the country who is demeaning the dignity and respect that his office commands.

Mr. Speaker, this has to stop. There are those who say wait until the next election. I am not one of them. I believe that the remedy for this kind of behavior and the impact that it is having on society is impeachment.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Rabbi David-Seth Kirshner, Temple Emanu-El, Closter, New Jersey, offered the following prayer:

As we embark on this sacred day of work to better the lives of all Americans, we ask that You, God, help instill these leaders of the 115th Congress with patience, wisdom, empathy, and respect to achieve and exceed our goals for today and for tomorrow. Help us demonstrate our gratitude for our service people and first responders who work as our partners in fulfilling our shared mission.

God, we ask You today to disseminate Your sunlight and shower down Your rain, which will help us cultivate the seeds of securing our freedoms, celebrating our democracy, and championing tolerance for now and forever.

May it be Your will that the generations to come that will live within and lead this great Nation can enjoy the blooming flowers and sweet fruits of our labors on this sacred day.

God, we ask You to bless this Congress and these United States of America.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.